

Jim Sanders  
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## **Hold Your Horses**

Jim Sanders was a contract-for-hire manufacturing engineer. He came to a point in his life where he could retire. He could sell his 25 acre property and his horses and move to a condominium, but that was too boring for Mr. Sanders. Instead, he decided to pursue the American dream and start and own his own business. Mr. Sanders was not just horsing around with this idea of a business; he actually went out and started one. Now he is the proud owner of Shadow Creek Farm, a 26,000 square foot horse boarding center located in Munson, Ohio.

Mr. Sanders always loved horses, so having a business with horses was a natural. He has owned, bred, judged, and showed horses for 25 years. But to start this business, he needed financing. Luckily, Mr. Sanders met up with Sharon Jarold, a banker with Middlefield Bank. Sharon loves and owns horses herself, so she had a good understanding of this type of business. With this combination of a horse loving entrepreneur and banker, and the help of an SBA guaranteed loan made by Middlefield Bank, the business became a reality. The boarding center has three barns, with 64 boarding stalls, plus has an indoor and outdoor arena. The center boards any breed of horse and gives riding and driving lessons.

There are other horse boarding facilities in the area, but Mr. Sanders went into the business with a good perspective of his competition. "It's not that the county needed another facility, they just needed a good one", said Mr. Sanders. That confidence, honed from his experience, helped him develop a barn management philosophy that is different from other facilities. Shadow Creek Farm emphasizes regular care and attention of horses. That proper care, he says, is what distinguishes his boarding center from other operations that only care about making money, with little regard for the horses. Another important factor is people skills and keeping promises. "If you can't keep the customer happy, you're not going to have the customer for long", said Mr. Sanders.

Owning and operating this business is hard work and requires long hours. But, according to Mr. Sanders, owning a business is still preferable to the uncertainty of contract employment and the overall two hour a day commute he used to do. Mr. Sanders says he pursued this venture out of love. "There's no place that you'd really appreciate at 7 am more than being in my barn, drinking a cup of coffee, and hearing the horses munch their hay. That's true peace and tranquility" said Mr. Sanders.

With Mr. Sander's positive attitude and common sense (and horse sense) philosophy, along with his understanding that you have to work hard to succeed, Shadow Creek Farm is well on its way to being a success!